

Application No.: 10/707,831
Amendment Dated: December 28, 2005
Reply to Office Action of: June 28, 2005

Attorney Docket No.: 28647.00002
Customer No.: 35161

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-4. (Cancelled)

5. (Currently Amended) A ball return apparatus to facilitate ball return or retrieval during play on a game table having a net; comprising:

an elongated rigid first ramp member adapted to be positioned substantially parallel and adjacent to the net, said first ramp member being sloped to facilitate movement of a ball away from the net and towards a player when the ball hits the net during play of a game on the game table; and

a first end bracket and a second end bracket said, end brackets being connected to opposing ends of said first ramp member, wherein said first and second end brackets each comprise a deflecting surface extending substantially vertically above said first ramp member.

6. (Currently Amended) The ball return of claim 5, further comprising an elongated rigid second ramp member adapted to be positioned on an opposite side of the net from said first ramp member, said second ramp member being adapted to be positioned adjacent to and parallel to the net and comprising a lower edge spaced from said net.

7. (Original) The ball return apparatus of claim 6, wherein said first and second ramp members are connected together at least one location.

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8. (Currently Amended) A ball return apparatus to facilitate ball return or retrieval during play on a game table having a net, comprising:

an elongated rigid first ramp member adapted to be positioned substantially parallel and adjacent to the net, said first ramp member being sloped to facilitate movement of a ball away from the net and towards a player when the ball hits the net during play of a game on the game table;

an elongated rigid second ramp member adapted to be positioned on an opposite side of the net from said first ramp member, said second ramp member being adapted to be positioned adjacent and parallel to the net and comprising a lower edge spaced from said net, wherein said first and second ramp members are connected together at least one location, and wherein said connection comprises a connector member extending through the net and connected on one end to said first ramp member and on a second end to said second ramp member; and

a first end bracket and a second end bracket, said end brackets being connected to opposing ends of said first ramp member, wherein said first and second end brackets each comprise a deflecting surface extending substantially vertically above said first ramp member.

9. (Previously Presented) The ball return apparatus of claim 8, wherein said connection comprises at least one hook.

10. (Previously Presented) The ball return apparatus of claim 5, wherein said first ramp member comprises a plurality of connectable sections.

11. (Original) The ball return apparatus of claim 10, wherein said plurality of ramp sections are frictionally connected together.

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12. (Original) The ball return apparatus of claim 10, wherein said plurality of ramp sections are telescopingly connected.

13. (Original) The ball return apparatus of claim 6, wherein said second ramp member comprises at least one support element connected to a back side of said second ramp member and configured to support said second ramp member, said support member adapted to be supported on a top surface of the table.

14. (Currently Amended) A ball return apparatus to facilitate ball return or retrieval during play on a game table having a net, comprising:

an elongated rigid first ramp member adapted to be positioned substantially parallel to and adjacent the net, said first ramp member being sloped to facilitate movement of a ball away from the net and towards a player when the ball hits the net during play of a game on the game table;

an elongated rigid second ramp member adapted to be positioned on an opposite side of the net from said first ramp member, said second ramp member being adapted to be positioned adjacent to and parallel to the net and comprising a lower edge spaced from said net; and

further comprising a first and second end bracket connected to said second ramp member, wherein said first and second end brackets each comprise a deflecting surface extending substantially vertically above said first ramp member.

15. (Original) The ball return apparatus of claim 14, wherein said first and second end brackets comprise a deflecting surface extending substantially vertically above said second ramp member.

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16. (Cancelled)

17. (Currently Amended) A ball return apparatus to facilitate ball retrieval during play on a game table having a net, comprising:

a first rigid ramp member and a second rigid ramp member adapted to be positioned on the game table on opposite sides of the net and substantially parallel and adjacent to the net, said first and second ramp members being sloped to facilitate movement of a ball away from the net and towards a player positioned at an end of the game table; and

a first end bracket and a second end bracket connected to opposite ends of said first and second ramp members and each comprising a deflecting surface extending substantially vertically above said first and second ramp members.

18. (Original) The ball return apparatus of claim 17, wherein said first and second end brackets comprise an extension portion configured to direct the ball substantially toward the middle of the game table.

19. (Previously Presented) The ball return apparatus of claim 18, wherein said extension portion is angled relative to said deflecting surface.

20. (Previously Presented) The ball return apparatus of claim 17, wherein said first and second ramp members are connected together at least one location along the length of said first and second ramp members.

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21. (Currently Amended) A ball return apparatus to facilitate ball retrieval during play on a game table having a net, comprising:

a first rigid ramp member and a second rigid ramp member adapted to be positioned on the game table on opposite sides of the net and substantially parallel and adjacent to the net, said first and second ramp members being sloped to facilitate movement of a ball away from the net and towards a player positioned at an end of the game table;

wherein said first and second ramp members are connected together at least one location along the length of said first and second ramp members, wherein said connection extends through the net; and

a first end bracket and a second end bracket said end brackets being connected to opposing ends of said first ramp member, wherein said first and second end brackets each comprise a deflecting surface extending substantially vertically above said first ramp member.

22. (Previously Presented) The ball return apparatus of claim 17, wherein said first and second ramp members each comprise a support element connected to a back side, said support element configured to support said first and second ramp members on the game table.

23. (Currently Amended) A kit to facilitate the retrieval of a ball during play on a game table having a net, the comprising:

a kit in a packaged form having an elongated rigid first ramp member adapted to be positioned substantially parallel and adjacent to the net, said first ramp member being sloped to

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facilitate movement of a ball away from the net and towards a player when the ball hits the net during play of a game on the game table; and

a first end bracket and a second end bracket, said end brackets being connected to opposing ends of said first ramp member, wherein said first and second end brackets each comprise a deflecting surface extending substantially vertically above said first ramp member.